

## STEPPING OUT

### Notes

*Stepping Out* is a professional development opportunity designed to help you and your school achieve healthy school meals. During the training you will learn concepts and practice skills that will help you progress toward these high standards.

*Stepping Out* training includes these activities:

- ! A two-day summer workshop in which you will complete a variety of learning activities, many will be based on computer exercises;
- ! A six-month practice period, called a *practicum*, in which you will apply in your school the concepts and skills learned in the workshop; and
- ! A one-day workshop in which you will share your experiences and celebrate your success with other members of the class.

This workbook provides learning activities, practicum assignments and resources you will use to complete *Stepping Out*. In addition, a member of the *Stepping Out* team will visit your school during the training to provide help and answer questions.

### BACKGROUND

In recent years, concerns have been raised about the overall nutritional content of school meals. Perhaps you have heard or read information criticizing school lunch and breakfast.

Some of these concerns are related to the fact that diets of Americans have changed from being low in nutrients to being high in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium. At the same time, Americans eat too few grains, fruits and vegetables.

Further, research findings show the importance of a healthy diet in preventing chronic health problems and promoting good health and well being.

As a first step in dealing with these concerns, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), with the Department of Health and Human Services, issued the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, a set of recommendations for diet changes. These guidelines are based on the principles of balance, moderation and variety.

### STATE STANDARDS

In 1992, the West Virginia State Board of Education adopted a comprehensive child nutrition policy that implemented this dietary guidance in school meals. These *Standards for School Nutrition, Policy 4321.1* require that all West Virginia students in public schools offering lunch and/or breakfast programs have access to meals that meet:

- Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA)
  - 1/4 RDA for breakfast
  - 1/3 RDA for lunch;
- Calorie Goals
  - age appropriate; and
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans
  - balanced nutrient content.

School Food Authorities (SFAs) could select one of two state menu planning systems to meet these goals.

## State Standards - Option A

- USDA Meal Pattern
- Calories
- $\leq 30\%$  Calories from Fat
- Selected Vitamins
- Protein
- Calcium
- Iron
- Dietary Fiber
- Water

Option A established nutrient goals. Under this system meals were required to meet current USDA meal pattern component requirements, while also meeting nutrient goals and targets. A computer nutrient analysis program was used to plan and measure Option A menus against these targets.

## State Standards - Option B

- Fruit/Vegetable (1 or 1.25 cups)
  - fresh 5 weekly
- Meat/Meat Alternates (1.5 or 2 oz.)
  - low fat and sodium choices
  - dried beans weekly
- Grains/Breads (10 or 12 servings weekly)
  - part whole grain 5 times
- Milk (1 cup)
  - offer lower fat choices
- Water

Option B was based on current USDA meal pattern components. The lunch meal pattern was modified by: increasing the number of servings of fruit/vegetable and grains; requiring some whole grains; moderating fats; and offering beans.

Both Option A and Option B were designed to achieve the same outcome — healthy meals that meet the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. West Virginia schools have made major steps toward this goal.

**ACTIVITY:****Interest Building Strategy/Sharing Success**

1. Form groups of 4-6. Use pen and newsprint.
2. Brainstorm and record some steps your school/county have successfully made toward achieving healthy meals.
3. Share some success stories.

**USDA SCHOOL MEAL INITIATIVE**

In 1995, a final Federal rule was established requiring new nutrition standards for school meals nationwide. This *School Meal Initiative for Healthy Children* created new Federal menu planning systems and allowed states to design or approve other models to attain the same goals.

Today in West Virginia, counties may choose from the federal planning systems or the state's Option A or Option B. Most of you represent counties that have chosen Option B.

Regardless of the system chosen, all schools beginning with the 1996-97 school year were required by USDA to be "working in good faith toward" healthy meal standards. Program regulations require that this progress be measured using computer nutrient analysis of a sample of breakfast and lunch menus.

This analysis must include all planned menus, with all items weighted according to the number of portions planned. This differs from current interpretation of state policy, in that West Virginia standards require that ONE MEAL meet nutrition goals.

These new Federal regulations and rules place additional responsibilities on both state and local program staff. The state agency is responsible for monitoring counties' progress toward meeting goals.

To meet this requirement, Office of Child Nutrition staff nutrient analyzes meals. These reviews occur simultaneously with Coordinated Review Effort monitoring visits.

State Responsibility  
Nutrient Analyze Meals

Local Responsibility  
Maintain Adequate Documentation

State staff selects and analyzes a sample of breakfast and lunch menus. Counties and schools maintain records that support this analysis.

## TRAINING PURPOSES

*Stepping Out* will help you develop the skills and knowledge you will need to carry out your responsibilities in meeting nutrient standards. Through learning activities and practice, you will discover:

- The value of using standardized recipes;
- How to develop and write local recipes;
- How to maintain nutrient information for processed foods;
- How to plan menus that meet nutrient standards;
- How to keep records that support a nutrient analysis; and
- The importance of promoting healthy food choices for students.

During the workshop, you will be doing a variety of computer exercises. The intent is NOT to teach you to do menu planning using a nutrient analysis system or to become proficient in using analysis software. Computer work is simply a learning TOOL.

Computer as a learning **TOOL**

Throughout this practice you will be asked to “Step Out” into your school situation and think how information learned will help shape your future decisions and actions.

Before going to the computer lab, Federal nutrient standards and age grouping requirements will be reviewed.

## **NUTRIENT STANDARDS**

### **Definition**

**What is a Nutrient Standard?**

The required level of calories and nutrients for a specific grade or age group is a nutrient standard.

Since children of different ages need different amounts of nutrients, nutrient standards are set for specific age groups. Planned and offered breakfast and/or lunch menus averaged over a week should meet the nutrient standards of the age group for which they are intended. Meeting these standards is the goal for all menu planning systems.

## CALORIES AND NUTRIENTS IN THE NUTRIENT STANDARDS

The following are approved standards.

### Calories and Nutrients in Nutrient Standards

- Calories
- $\leq 30\%$  Calories from Fat
- $< 10\%$  Calories from Saturated Fat
- Protein
- Calcium
- Iron
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C

Foods containing these nutrients typically contain other essential nutrients not included in the nutrient standards.

### Other Nutrients and Dietary Components Analyzed

Cholesterol	Dietary Fiber
Sodium	Carbohydrate

Other nutrients and dietary components that will be analyzed are carbohydrates, cholesterol, sodium and dietary fiber. State standards have been adopted for sodium and fiber, while cholesterol and carbohydrate are optional standards.

**GRADE NUTRIENT STANDARDS - BREAKFAST**

<b>Calories and Nutrient Levels for School Breakfast</b>			
	<b>Pre-School</b>	<b>Grades K-12</b>	<b>Option Grades 7-12</b>
<b>Energy Allowances (Calories)</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>618</b>
<b>Total fat (g)<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>13<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>18<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>21<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Total saturated fat (g)</b>	<b>4<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>6<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>7<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Protein (g)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Calcium (mg)</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Iron (mg)</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>Vitamin A (RE)</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Vitamin C (mg)</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>

<sup>1</sup>Total fat not to exceed 30 percent over a school week

<sup>2</sup>Saturated fat to be less than 10 percent over a school week

<sup>3</sup>The grams of fat will vary depending on actual level of calories

**GRADE NUTRIENT STANDARDS - LUNCH**

<b>Calories and Nutrient Levels for School Lunch (School Week Averages)</b>				
	<b>Pre-School</b>	<b>Grades K-6</b>	<b>Grades 7-12</b>	<b>Grades K-3 Option</b>
<b>Energy Allowances (Calories)</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>633</b>
<b>Total fat (g)<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>17<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>22<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>28<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>21<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Total saturated fat (g)<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>6<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>7<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>9<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>7<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Protein (g)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Calcium (mg)</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>Iron (mg)</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.3</b>
<b>Vitamin A (RE)</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Vitamin C (mg)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>

<sup>1</sup>Total fat not to exceed 30 percent over a school week

<sup>2</sup>Saturated fat to be less than 10 percent over a school week

<sup>3</sup>The grams of fat will vary depending on actual level of calories

The calorie and nutrient needs of children vary by their gender, age, size and activity level. The caloric standards for breakfast and lunch are estimates of the minimum energy needed.

Some children, especially older males, may require considerably more than the minimum. Children who are large for their ages or more active may need more calories. Menu planners should adjust the amounts of foods served to provide for the caloric needs of all children.

## **CONCLUSION**

Now you are ready to begin computer exercises designed to show how the analysis of school meals works. Remember that your objective is NOT to learn how to analyze meals. Your experience in the computer lab will help you understand:

- The value of using standardized recipes;
- How to develop and write local recipes;
- How to maintain nutrient information for processed foods;
- How to plan menus that meet nutrient standards;
- How to keep records that support a nutrient analysis; and
- The importance of promoting healthy food choices for students.